

***U.S. House Subcommittee examines local-state-federal partnership to provide final resting place for our nation's heroes***

Preston, MN – Today, Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN) and Congressman Jon Runyan (R-NJ) held a bipartisan Veterans Affairs Subcommittee field hearing in Preston, Minnesota to examine the federal veterans cemetery grants program and the process used by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to construct new state-run veterans cemeteries, such as the one proposed for southeastern Minnesota. Rep. Runyan is the Chairman of the U.S. House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) and Walz is a member of the subcommittee.

**“After the tremendous sacrifices made by our nations veterans, our brave warriors deserve a final resting place that will both honor their memory and give them peace of mind in knowing they will be close to family and loved ones. Today, we heard from local, state, and federal officials who are all working together with our veterans to provide a final resting place for our nation’s heroes,”** said Walz, a 24 year veteran of the Army National Guard. “

**I would like to thank Chairman Runyan for being here today to examine how the federal veterans cemetery grants program can help communities like ours pay tribute to the sacrifices made by our veterans.”**

**“Though our economy is still in the midst of a fragile recovery, it is important to fund priority programs for veterans and honor their service. Public Partnerships, such as the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, are great ways to protect the final resting place of our nation’s veterans,”** said Runyan. **“I would like to thank Congressman Walz for inviting me to Minnesota and hosting this hearing, for his personal military service, and his advocacy for veterans both here in his home State and across the country. He is a key Member of the House Veterans Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee and I look forward to continuing this work with him to ensure our vets receive the benefits they have more than earned in service.”**

The southeastern Minnesota site currently sits atop the national list of proposals for new veterans cemetery proposals. Construction of the new cemetery would not only provide a final resting place for the over 40,000 veterans in southeast Minnesota, its construction would also create jobs in the local economy.

Minnesota currently has only one state veterans cemetery, which is located in Little Falls—nearly 250 miles away from the over 40,000 veterans who call southeast Minnesota home. Fort Snelling National Cemetery is located in Twin Cities, 120 miles away.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's National Cemetery Administration. The program assists states, territories and federally recognized tribal governments in providing gravesites for Veterans in those areas where VA's national cemeteries cannot fully satisfy their burial needs. Grants may be used only for the purpose of establishing, expanding or improving Veterans cemeteries that are owned and operated by a state, federally recognized tribal government, or U.S. territory. Aid can be granted only to states, federally recognized tribal government, or U.S. territories. VA cannot provide grants to private organizations, counties, cities or other government agencies.

For more information about the hearing, including a witness list and written testimony, please visit the Veterans Affairs Committee website by [clicking here](#).

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